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PATENT
Attorney Docket No. 501295

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of:

Dawn Marie Schwarzkopf

Group Art Unit: 3712

Application No: 09/920,676

Examiner: Dmitry Suhol

Filed: August 2, 2001

For: Teaching Apparatus And Method Of Enabling
Use Of Keyboard By Young Children

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SUPPORTING DECLARATION UNDER 37 CFR 1.131

1. I am employed in the Freeport School District 145 Technology Department. In my position I have responsibility for installing and supporting computer equipment and supplies for the Freeport School District 145, including the Taylor Park Elementary School where Ms. Dawn Marie Schwarzkopf, is employed as a first grade teacher. I am often called upon to research and aid teachers in the purchase of new software and computer related hardware for their classrooms and homes.

2. I have been advised that Ms. Schwarzkopf's patent application for a TEACHING APPARATUS AND METHOD OF ENABLING USE OF KEYBOARD BY YOUNG CHILDREN has been rejected based on an advertisement on page 26 of the Educational Resources Fall 2000 catalog for a Reading Readiness Keyboard Cover. I have also been advised that this catalog was mailed on August 19, 2000. I make this declaration to support Ms. Schwarzkopf's declaration under 37 CFR 1.131 swearing behind this reference.

3. Prior to August 19, 2000, Ms. Schwarzkopf described to me a problem she experienced with her young first grade learners in using the computer equipment provided in her school that detracted from the children's learning and increased their frustration with the computer equipment. Specifically, Ms. Schwarzkopf described that the computer keyboards supplied to her school included only the upper case letters of the alphabet. However, Ms. Schwarzkopf informed me that since they do not teach the children upper case letters until later in the year, initial usage of the computer equipment was difficult for the children because many of the children do not yet understand the relationship between upper and lower case letters. Ms. Schwarzkopf then explained to me that this problem could be overcome if both upper and lower case letters were provided. Specifically, Ms. Schwarzkopf explained to me that such problems could be avoided through the use of a keyboard cover that would allow the children to see both the upper and associated lower case letter for each key.

4. Having explained to me the dilemma and proposed solution, Ms. Schwarzkopf asked me prior to August 19, 2000, to see if any such keyboard covers existed on the market. I then looked for covers for the keyboards as described by Ms. Schwarzkopf, but could only find keyboard covers that would offer protection from dust and spills.

5. Prior to August 19, 2000, Ms. Schwarzkopf again approached me for assistance in researching the availability of the keyboard covers that would allow her young learners to see both the upper and lower case letters to aid them in using the computer equipment at her school. I reviewed all of the catalogs that I had which included computer related equipment, checked with office supply stores, and performed on line research in an attempt to find such a keyboard cover. I also attended computer trade shows at Harper College in Barrington, Illinois and the College of DuPage in Elmhurst, Illinois and searched for this type of keyboard cover. However, this research yielded no such keyboard cover.

6. Prior to August 19, 2000, I was again approached by Ms. Schwarzkopf to assist her in locating such keyboard covers that could be used in her classroom. I performed more extensive on-line research at Ms. Schwarzkopf's request, but was unable to come up with any keyboard covers as she described.

7. After the start of the 2000-2001 school year which began on August 23, 2000, and before April 3, 2001, Ms. Schwarzkopf again approached me and asked if I could find any keyboard overlays that she could use in her classroom as discussed above. I again searched my materials but was unable to find any such overlays.

8. I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code, and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

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Randall Pottorff

Freeport School District 145 Technology Department

Dated: 4-11-02